

Testimony and Biography

For

Douglas B. Arnot

United States House of Representatives

Committee on Homeland Security

March 12, 2008

TESTIMONY
Of
Douglas B. Arnot
For
United States House Of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
March 12, 2008

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security Report to Congress on the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games fairly represents some of the baseline statistics that begin to outline the challenge of securing the events for 2010. As one of the World's "super events" the Olympic Winter Games are an extraordinary organization and execution challenge.

The number of athletes, officials, media, broadcasters, spectators listed in the DHS report are part of the picture. The Games will be spread over a distance of 120 kilometers stretching from Vancouver and Richmond to Whistler Mountain. There will be four venue clusters and two Athlete Villages. Some of these areas, particularly the more remote, are served by limited public safety resources. So, the capability of calling on existing "reserves" or off-duty personnel is not an option, and the force must be supplemented. As at all Winter Games the rugged terrain around the mountain venues calls for special attention and the winter weather can be particularly harsh on personnel, equipment and infrastructure.

The Olympic Games attract the attention of the world as no other event. Any incident at an Olympics is felt around the world. The Games have been attacked twice, and should be protected as an attractive target. That target grows larger with each consecutive Games as they evolve beyond the sports venues into many major public celebrations, attracting an event population that is several multiples of the number of ticketed spectators and event support personnel.

The security period of the Games, with some waves of increasing and decreasing activity is about 60 days. The number of places that must be secured is well beyond the obvious competition and key non competition venues. Live sites, medal ceremonies, concerts, sponsor events, and much more, expand the event and the job of securing the event.

Of course, all of the Games-related activity is added to the normal activity of the host city / region and so, as noted, the resources needed to secure the host city / region grows well beyond the local resources regularly available for public safety. Thus, I am sure that Canada is planning significant Federal support such as that which was provided and absolutely necessary for the 2002 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

Arguably the most critical aspect of securing the Games is adopting a command and control structure that will serve the Games in planning and preparation as well as in execution of the plan. In Games prior to Salt Lake, planning by public safety agencies for Games Security tended to exclude a major player, the event itself. Yet, a clear understanding of the event, provided by knowledgeable and experienced Games experts, is essential to Security planning and an understanding of what resources each agency and organization can provide to the plan.

Early planning for Salt Lake City was similarly isolated from the event. Inexperienced local planners worked in an information vacuum. But, over time, an extraordinary new model was developed. It was a complex private, public partnership of Local, State and Federal agencies, the United States Military and the Organizing Committee that structured a plan that was strong enough that it required little modification after 9/11. It was the seemingly endless integration work sessions, with key agencies and the Organizing Committee at the table, that developed the appreciation and understanding of roles, responsibilities, resources and procedures for the routine, as well as the exceptional, that made the security operation at the 2002 Olympic Winter Games a success. A similar approach is suggested for planning the U.S. operations for 2010.

One apparent challenge for 2010 is to secure the Northwest border states without unduly disrupting the experience of Olympic visitors or the lives and commerce of the region. To achieve this, the security force must develop a comprehensive understanding of the event itself with which, even at a distance, it will be interacting daily. As fundamental as it may seem, an understanding and trust must be developed in order for each agency and organization to develop an appreciation for the task and challenge of the others so that a balanced, team plan can be developed.

The DHS report logically focuses on the Washington, Idaho and Montana borders. But, the burden at those points can be reduced with appropriate interaction with more distant ports of entry in other parts of the USA. An Olympic Travel plan such as that developed for Salt Lake should be considered. Working with the Organizing Committee, information about athletes, media, broadcasters, and officials was developed and shared with multiple ports of entry into the USA. The same was done for sports and broadcast equipment that is critical to the Games. There was also the appointment of intermediate airports for private aircraft inspection, again reducing the burden on the "Olympic Zone". This might be considered for air traffic in traveling north as well as south.

Working with the Vancouver Olympic Organizing Committee, a detailed understanding of event schedules and crowds should be developed. Travel (USA Re-entry) profiles need to be studied and border-demand anticipated. Public information programs detailing what Olympic Travelers can expect and how they can facilitate their own cross border travel must be balanced with threat assessments and properly adjusted search policies and procedures. The operation will need well trained personnel supported by information and communication. It is suggested that concepts such as express lanes, and off hours logistics and freight operations may reduce the peak hour burdens and add to search efficacy. The Winter Games present unique challenges posed by terrain, and weather. This should be accounted for in all planning, especially for a State-side response to an exceptional incident in Canada that could prompt an unanticipated early, mass departure from the event.

Throughout the World, Olympic Athletes, and Officials, the media that follow them and the many National and Team officials that support them enjoy a status at international borders that is the near equivalent of international diplomats. As the USA has responded to terrorist threats, our reputation as a host or travel hub for international sport has deteriorated. By re-engaging operations like the 24 hour Rapid Response effort of the U.S. State Department and INS (developed for the Salt Lake Olympics) we can monitor the travel of athletes and key officials and ensure them an appropriate welcome and ease of transit from a U.S. port of entry all the way to the Vancouver Games.

These practices helped the USA to avoid what could have been very damaging international press reports of athletes or officials in holding cells waiting resolution of entry status. To the contrary, the hard work on entry procedures set the tone for a Salt Lake Games that many hailed as the best Winter Olympics ever. With information, communication and cooperation we can facilitate travel to the 2010 Olympic Winter Games without jeopardizing our national security. As the USA seeks the honor of hosting the world in 2016 in Chicago, we can enhance our place among sport-loving nations of the world.

DOUGLAS B. ARNOT
Senior Vice President
Chicago 2016

Brief Biography

Served as

- Executive Vice President of World Cup USA 1994
- Managing Director Venues, Atlanta Olympics 1996
- Liaison Olympic Coordination Authority to Sydney Organizing Committee Sydney 2000
- Managing Director of Operations, Salt Lake 2002
- Utah Olympic Public Safety Command 2002
- Consultant Athens 2004
- Consultant Torino 2006
- Consultant New York 2012
- Security Operations Consultant, Major League Soccer
- Senior Vice President Operations, Chicago 2016

As one who has had the responsibility for planning the overall operations of several of the World's largest events, I have spent significant time learning, planning and implementing plans for the securing of these events. With my comprehensive knowledge of the entire event operations, it has been my responsibility to develop the relationships and the security / operations integration of Military, Law Enforcement and other Public Safety agencies with the event organization for seamless on-the-ground operations.